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# Birding in Ghana, West Africa

*David Moyer*

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**Resumé:** Jetez un coup d'oeil aux annonces au dos de la plupart des revues pour ornithologistes et vous verrez qu'on vous propose un grand nombre de voyages spécialisés en Afrique. Toutefois, le Ghana figure rarement parmi les destinations. Cela est regrettable car le Ghana a beaucoup à offrir aux ornithologistes. Les Ghanéens sont un des peuples les plus chaleureux d'Afrique de l'Ouest et comme l'anglais est la langue nationale, ceux qui ne parlent pas français n'ont pas de problème pour communiquer.

Le Ghana est le pays le plus à l'est du bloc principal de forêt humide de Haute Guinée et, en tant que tel, il occupe une place importante dans la conservation d'espèces d'oiseaux endémiques à cet habitat. Le système d'aires protégées est bien développé et consiste en parcs nationaux, en réserves de ressources (auparavant réserves de production de gibier), en sanctuaires pour la faune sauvage et en réserves forestières.

A quick look at advertisements in the back of most birding magazines will reveal a large number of speciality tours on offer within Africa. Ghana is, however, rarely listed among the destinations. This is most unfortunate as Ghana has much to offer to birders. Ghanaians are among the most friendly people in West Africa, and with English as the national language, communication is rarely a problem for those who do not speak French.

Ghana is the easternmost country within the main block of Upper Guinea rainforest and, as such, it occupies an important place in the conservation of bird species endemic to this habitat. The protected area system is well developed and consists of national parks, resource reserves (formerly game production reserves), wildlife sanctuaries, and forest reserves.

## Geography and Habitats

Ghana has a total area of 242,000 km<sup>2</sup>: it is bounded by Togo to the east, Burkina Faso to the north, Côte d'Ivoire to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. The northern part of the country is mostly covered by Guinea savanna woodland. This habitat looks superficially similar to the miombo woodlands of eastern and southern Africa, but has an entirely different tree species composition. In the extreme northeast, the rainfall declines and the Guinea savanna woodland gives way to the dry Sudan zone woodland of the Sahel. Most of the southern part of Ghana is within the Upper Guinea forest zone, the forest extending in a wedge shape with its base along the Côte d'Ivoire border north to Sunyani and the apex to Akosombo at the southern tip of Lake Volta. Two other major habitats, the coastal thicket and grasslands, cover the southeast corner of the country. The coastal thicket zone extends in a narrow strip from near Takoradi east to Accra. The area from Accra east to the

Volta River, and north to Akuse, is occupied by the Accra-Akuse-Keta grasslands (Accra-Ho-Keta plains). There is a small outlier of these grasslands at Winneba west of Accra and a thin slice along the eastern border area from the Akosombo-Ho line north to Nkwanta in the Volta Region.

## Topography and Climate

Ghana is relatively flat with most of the country lying between 100–300 m above sea level. However, the hills along the southwestern edge of the Volta basin from Akosombo to Mampong (Ashanti) reach elevations of over 600 m and several peaks in the Togo Hills near Nkwanta are over 800 m.

During the day temperatures in the forest zone average around 30°C, and in the northern regions, slightly higher. The temperature, however, rarely exceeds 22°C inside closed canopy forest.

In the south, the rainy season is bimodal with peaks in June and October, interrupted by a short dry spell in late July and August. In the north there is a single wet season with a peak in rainfall during August and September.

The best time to visit the forest zone is during August when conditions are relatively cool and dry. The vegetation is still green and lush from the first rains and birds' vocal activity is high. However, this is the time of peak rainfall in the north and if you plan to visit both areas then it is probably best to travel sometime in January or February.

## The Birds

The written history of ornithology in Ghana goes back to 1705, when W. Bosman made sketches of some common birds that he encountered while stationed at Axim and Elmina<sup>4</sup>. Since then there has been a long succession of professional and amateur ornithologists

who have contributed to the knowledge of Ghanaian birds. Despite the large amount of work done in Ghana, there are still unexplored areas in the country and the distribution and status of many species are poorly known.

To date an impressive country total of 725 bird species has been recorded in Ghana<sup>1,4</sup>. Two of the best studied sites are Mole National Park within the Guinea Savannah and Kakum National Park within the forest zone. Ornithologists have been visiting Mole for many years and the species list stands at around 316 species<sup>3</sup>. Kakum National Park protects a forested area in the central region near Cape Coast. This is a relatively new national park with a total of 269 bird species recorded so far. With further fieldwork this list will certainly grow.

### Forest Birding Tips

When birding in high forest it is advisable to have a telescope. Many of the small canopy birds are often silhouetted against the sky and can be impossible to identify using only binoculars. A tape-recorder and good quality shotgun microphone are very useful to coax some of the more retiring forest understory species into view. It will also prove to be valuable for owling. Always have a good supply of 5 litre ziploc bags or 'dry-bags' to keep optical and audio equipment dry during the frequent rain showers in the forest.

### Birding Localities

In the following account more attention will be given to sites within easy travelling distance of Accra. Lack of space prohibits the inclusion of comprehensive species lists for each locality mentioned. Instead a general impression of birding prospects and a few of the highlights for each site will be given. Localities are organised by administrative region and are ranked in order of distance and accessibility from Accra.

### Greater Accra Region

#### Accra and Legon

The older residential areas in Accra (North Ridge, East Ridge, Ringway estates, Cantonments, and Achimota) contain good numbers of birds. Close to the downtown area, the grounds of the Sunrise Hotel in North Ridge are particularly good. Some of the more interesting species seen here are; **Red-thighed Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter erythropus*, **Olive Thrush** *Turdus pelios*, and **Yellow-billed Shrike** *Corvinella corvina*.

The University of Ghana at Legon is a great place to bird if your time is limited, with **Grey Hornbill** *Tockus nasutus*, **Green Wood-Hoopoe** *Phoeniculus*

*purpureus*, **Yellow-fronted Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus chrysoconus*,  **Vieillot's Barbet** *Lybius vieilloti*, **Fine-spotted Woodpecker** *Campethera punctuligera*, **Splendid Sunbird** *Nectarinia coccinigaster* and **Purple Glossy Starling** *Lamprolornis purpureus* all occurring around the campus.

#### Korle Lagoon

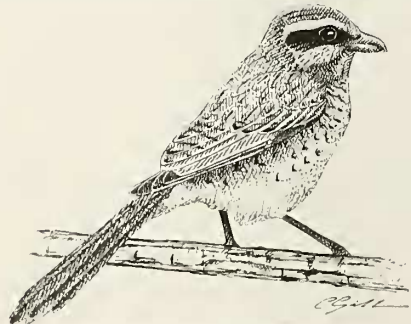
This heavily polluted lagoon is within the city limits of Accra near the suburbs of Korle-Bu and Korle Gonno. While not a pleasant place, it holds internationally important populations of **Curlew Sandpiper** *Calidris ferruginea* during the northern winter<sup>9</sup>.

#### Panbros Salt pans and Densu River Delta

The Panbros area, 11 km west of Accra along the road to Cape Coast, is a mosaic of salt pans, brackish water lagoons, sand-dunes, marsh and scrub. This is an important wintering site for migrant waders in Ghana<sup>9</sup>. Apart from waders, many other species can be seen there including **Black Crake** *Amaurornis flavirostris*, **Black-shouldered Kite** *Elanus caeruleus*, **Greater Swamp-Warbler** *Acrocephalus rufescens*, **Winding Cisticola** *Cisticola galactotes*, **Black-winged Red Bishop** *Euplectes hordeaceus*, **Red Bishop** *Euplectes orix*, **Yellow-mantled Widowbird** *Euplectes macrourus* and **Slender-billed Weaver** *Ploceus pelzelni*.

#### Shai Hills Resource Reserve

This is one of the most accessible protected areas in Ghana being situated about one hour north of Accra on the Accra Plains. Take the Tema Expressway and then head north at the traffic circle on the road to Kpong and Akosombo. The habitat around Shai Hills is similar to parts of the East African savanna but bird species are mostly different. There is a game drive in the park starting from the entrance gate and circling the rocky outliers of the Shai Hills. Some species can be seen from a car but the best way to bird here is on foot. The sections of road through the thickets on the south-east side of the hills, and along the east side (after the game protection camp) are ideal for this. A



Yellow-billed Shrike *Corvinella corvina*  
Chris Gibbins

climb through the cassia forest up to the Obonutem and Sayu caves will also add species to your list, and the view from the top of the Hioweyo Hill is memorable.

**Stone Partridge** *Ptilopachus petrosus* and **Double-spurred Francolin** *Francolinus bicalcaratus* are abundant everywhere in the reserve, but **White-throated Francolin** *F. albogularis* is much more difficult to find. Some common and frequently heard species in the cassia groves are **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat** *Cossypha niveicapilla*, **Gonolek** *Laniarius barbarus*, and **Green-backed Camaroptera** *Camaroptera brachyura*. However, many of these species are skulkers and seeing them requires patience. There are several resident pairs of **Mocking Cliff-Chat** *Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris*,



Mocking Cliff-Chat *Myrmecocichla cinnamomeiventris*  
Mark Andrews

around the Sayu bat cave and on the larger rock outcrops on the hills. Although they are noisy, these birds are also quite adept at staying out of sight and you will have to work to get a good view of them. The thickets, strips of riverine bush and cassia groves on the plains are home to a population of **Violet Turaco** *Musophaga violacea*, one of the most colourful birds in Ghana. This species spends much of its time hidden in thick vegetation but is conspicuous when flying between thickets. Another colourful species resident on the wooded plains is the **Senegal Parrot** *Poicephalus senegalus*. They are easy to see in the early mornings and evenings when pairs and small flocks fly out from the hills to feeding grounds and return in the evening to roost. Many other bird species are found in the Shai Hills and these included **Vinaceous Dove** *Streptopelia vinacea*, **Red-eyed Dove** *S. semitorquata*, **Blue-spotted Wood Dove** *Turtur afer*, **Black-throated Honeyguide** *Indicator indicator*, **Yellow-throated Longclaw** *Macronyx croceus*, **Croaking Cisticola** *Cisticola natalensis*, **Whistling Cisticola** *C. lateralis*, **Zitting Cisticola** *C. juncidis*, **Siffling Cisticola** *C. brachyptera*, **Pale Flycatcher** *Bradornis pallidus*, and **White-shouldered Tit** *Parus guineensis*.

## Songaw Lagoon

Songaw is a complex of brackish lagoons with shallow muddy margins, mudflats and saltpans about 80 km east of Accra. This is a RAMSAR site (internationally important wetland) and the most important resting area for terns Sternidae in Ghana<sup>10</sup>. Many species of waders can also be seen there.

## Eastern Region

### Aburi Botanical Gardens

Aburi in the Akwapim hills is about a 45 minute drive north-east of Accra. Modest but comfortable accommodation is available at the botanical gardens or at the Olyander Guest House (350 m from the north entrance). The botanical gardens, although now considerably run-down, are still attractive and home to many species of birds. Among the species that can be found are **African Goshawk** *Accipiter tachiro tousсенелии*, **Ahanta Francolin** *Francolinus abantensis*, **Green Turaco** *Tauraco persa*, **Black-throated Coucal** *Centropus leucogaster*, **Hairy-breasted Barbet** *Tricholaema hirsuta*, **Speckled Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus scolopaceus*, **Honeyguide Greenbul** *Baeopogon indicator*, **Grey-headed Bristlebill** *Bleda canicapilla*, **Red-tailed Greenbul** *Criniger calurus*, **Gambian Puff-back** *Dryoscopus gambensis*, **Green Crombec** *Sylvietta virens*, **Green Hylia** *Hylia prassina*, **Blue-throated Brown Sunbird** *Nectarinia cyanolaema*, **White-breasted Negrofinch** *Nigrita fusconota*, **Grey-crowned Negrofinch** *N. canicapilla*, **Forest Chestnut-winged Starling** *Onychognathus fulgidus*, and **Splendid Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis splendidus*.



Black-throated Coucal  
*Centropus leucogaster*  
Mark Andrews

### Atewa Range

The Atewa Range is a group of hills about two hours north-west of Accra between Kade and Korforidua. The best access to this area is through the town of Kibi. Atewa reaches elevations of over 600 m and supports patches of upland evergreen forest, one of the rarest

and most interesting habitats in Ghana. This area has never been properly explored ornithologically and should prove rewarding for anyone with the time to visit<sup>1</sup>.

### **Kwahu Plateau (also known as the Nkawkaw escarpment)**

Like the Atewa range, forests on the Kwahu Plateau near Nkawkaw should provide rewarding birding for anyone with the time to go there. The Kwahu Plateau forms part of the southern scarp of the Volta basin, and breeding colonies of **Yellow-headed Rockfowl** *Picathartes gymnocephalus* are known from there<sup>4,5</sup>.

## **Central Region**

### **Winneba grasslands (plains)**

The Winneba grasslands are an outlier of the Accra-Akuse-Sogakofe grasslands (Accra-Ho-Keta plains) and are about one hour west of Accra on the road to Cape Coast. One of the easiest points of access to this habitat is 5.5 km west of the Winneba traffic circle at Gomoa Amanfi. At this point there are relatively intact areas of grassland, seasonally flooded grassland and thicket. This is the home of a disjunct population of **Black-backed Cisticola** *Cisticola eximia winneba* discovered by Admiral H. Lynes and J. Vincent in 1931<sup>7</sup>. Other species of interest recorded here included **Yellow-throated Longclaw**, **Croaking Cisticola**, **Siffling Cisticola**, **Moustached Grass-warbler** *Melocichla mentalis*, **Red-winged Prinia** *Prinia erythroptera*, and **Quailfinch** *Ortygospiza atricollis*.

### **Brenu Beach**

Brenu Akyim is a small village 23 km west of Cape Coast. Access to this area is via an all-weather feeder road leading from the main Cape Coast-Takoradi trunk road. This road passes through some superb coastal thicket which is teeming with birds and this area, together with the pristine Brenu Lagoon and beach, is well worth visiting.

Some of the more interesting birds found there include: **Grey Kestrel** *Falco ardosiaceus*, **Guinea Turaco**, **Great Spotted Cuckoo** *Clamator glandarius*, **Pied-winged Swallow** *Hirundo leucosoma*, **Simple Greenbul** *Chlorocichla simplex*, **Sulphur-breasted Bush Shrike** *Malaconotus sulfureopectus*, **Gonolek**, **Snowy-crowned Robin-Chat**, **Red-faced Cisticola** *Cisticola erythroptus*, **Singing Cisticola** *C. cantans*, **Siffling Cisticola**, **Red-winged Prinia**, **Moho** *Hypergerus atriceps*, **Bar-breasted Firefinch** *Lagonosticta rufopicta*, **African Firefinch** *L. rubricata* and **Compact Weaver** *Ploceus superciliosus*.

### **Elmina salt pans**

Within Elmina town, 11 km west of Cape Coast, there is a complex of river, lagoon and salt-pans. These extend north to Bronyibima along the main Cape Coast-Takoradi trunk road. Dense mangroves and thickets make this an ideal site to look for **Wattle-eye** *Platysteira cyanea*, **Reichenbach's Sunbird** *Neectarinia reichenbachii*, **Orange Weaver** *Ploceus aurantius* and **Slender-billed Weaver** *P. pelzelni*.

### **Brimsu reservoir**

Brimsu reservoir, formed by a dam on the Kakum River, is 10 km north of Cape Coast. The access road junction along the main Cape Coast-Twifo Praso road is slightly over 6 km north of Pedu Junction. Natural forest around Brimsu is virtually gone, but the impoundment watershed has been planted with cassia and contains many forest birds. Specialities found there include **Latham's Forest Francolin** *Francoelinus lathami*, **White-spotted Flufftail** *Sarotbrura pulchra*, **Nkulengu Rail** *Himantornis haematopus*, **African Giant Kingfisher** *Ceryle maxima*, **Rosy Bee-eater** *Merops malimbicus*, **Red-rumped Tinkerbird** *Pogoniulus atroflavus*, **Black-cap Illadopsis** *Trichasioma cleaveri*, **White-throated Greenbul** *Phyllastrephus albigularis*, **Forest Robin** *Stiphrornis erythroborax* and **Red-cheeked Wattle-eye** *Platysteira blissetti*.

### **Cape Coast**

There are not many interesting species in and around Cape Coast, although there is often a pair of Piapiac *Ptilostomus afer* attending cows at the University of Cape Coast agricultural station. This site can be reached through the university campus or along a dirt track at Akotokyir just past the Abura market on the Twifo Praso road. Evenings at Akotokyir, Abura and Sakina are a good time to see **Mottled Spinetail** *Telacanthura ussberi*, and at dusk it is relatively easy to find **Long-tailed Nightjar** *Caprimulgus climacurus* along the gravel roads.

### **Kakum National Park**

Kakum National Park and the contiguous Assin Attandanso Resource Reserve protect a 360 km<sup>2</sup> area of high forest. Kakum is a half-hour drive north of Cape Coast, the principal town of the Central Region, and a 3 hour drive from Accra. A range of accommo-



Mottled Spinetail  
*Telacanthura ussberi*  
Mark Andrews

dation options is available in Cape Coast. If you are interested in seeing West African forest birds, then a visit to Kakum is essential.

Kakum's elevation varies from 135–250 m. There are some small hills in the south-west corner, but otherwise the terrain is gently undulating. Most of the park is covered in forest, virtually all of which has been selectively logged in the past. The areas most recently logged are characterised by a broken canopy, thick vine tangles and undergrowth, but elsewhere there is a comparatively open understorey and well-developed canopy.

There are 269 bird species whose presence in Kakum has been confirmed, and an additional 54 species on the hypothetical list. This number far exceeds the total of 143 species recorded in both Bia and Nini-Suhien National Parks, the only other protected forest areas in Ghana for which there are published bird lists<sup>2,11</sup>. Little fieldwork has, however, been undertaken by experienced observers in these parks, and the actual number of species there is not likely to be very different from Kakum. By contrast, the 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> Mole National Park (almost 14 times larger than Kakum) has 316 species<sup>3,7</sup>. Mole is mostly Guinea savanna, but contains at least nine different habitat types<sup>3</sup>. The number of species recorded there is not likely to increase much with further fieldwork as species totals from other well-studied Guinea savanna sites range from 300–329<sup>3,8</sup>.

A park checklist has been prepared for Kakum. To obtain a copy, write to the Senior Park Warden, Kakum National Park, PO Box 427, Cape Coast, Ghana or to the Ghana Program, Conservation International, 1015 18th St. NW, Suite 1000, Washington, DC 20036 (e-mail: m.omland@conservation.org).

There are good birding areas throughout Kakum. For visiting birders with a limited amount of time available, however, the recommended strategy will be to spend more time in some of the best spots. A few of these areas are listed below:

#### **Abrafo (Park Headquarters)**

Abrafo is the best place to bird in Kakum, both in terms of access and in number of species found there. The park headquarters at Abrafo is situated in a basin between Kakum National Park and Pra Suhien Forest Reserve, and extensive areas of forest edge and canopy are visible from the grounds. Many canopy species that are difficult to see in the forest can often be seen flying over the clearing or perched in the tops of tall trees. The forest trail system at Abrafo is quite good for viewing under-storey and middle-storey birds. During 1994 there was a mixed-species flock that formed each morning along the Kuntan trail just north of the

large *Canarium schwenfurthii* tree. This flock almost invariably contained a pair of the scarce **Yellow-bearded Greenbul** *Criniger olivaceus*.

The canopy walkway at Abrafo is probably the best area in Kakum from which to view canopy and aerial feeding birds. The largest platform on the walkway was built in a huge *Antiaris toxicaria* tree that is a constant focus of bird activity. Ten species of birds have been found nesting in this tree, **Great Sparrowhawk** *Accipiter melanoleucus*, **Red-necked Buzzard** *Buteo auguralis*, **Grey Parrot** *Psittacus erithacus*, **Red-fronted Parrot** *Poicephalus gularis*, **Blue-throated Roller** *Eurystomus gularis*, **Red-headed Malimbe** *Malimbus coronatus*, **Yellow-mantled Weaver** *Ploceus tricolor*, **Forest Chestnut-winged Starling**, **Splendid Glossy Starling** and **(Fork-tailed) Drongo** *Dicrurus adsimilis*. Other species frequently seen from (and on) the canopy walkway include **Black Dwarf Hornbill** *Tockus hartlaubi*, **Blue Cuckoo-shrike** *Coracina azurea*, **Red-billed Shrike** *Prionopus caniceps*, **Sabine's Puffback** *Dryoscopus sabinus*, **Brown-crowned Eremomela** *Eremomela badiceps*, **Sharpe's Apalis** *Apalis sharpei*, **Little Grey Flycatcher** *Muscicapa epulata*, and **Violet-backed Flycatcher** *Hyliota violacea*. Most birds display very little fear of humans at tree-top level and great close-up views of many species can be had. Take your camera to the walkway!

#### **Antwikwaa**

Antwikwaa is one of the best places to see forest-edge species, and birding along the dirt road through degraded forest, thicket, and cultivation near the forest boundary can be very rewarding. The cocoa farms near the game protection camp are usually full of birds including: **Grey Parrot**, **Piping Hornbill** *Ceratogymna fistulator*, **Sabine's Spinetail** *Rhaphidura sabinus*, **Black Bee-eater** *Merops gularis*, **Rosy Bee-eater**, **Naked-faced Barbet** *Gymnobucco calvus*, **Kemp's Longbill** *Macrosphenus flavicans kempis*, **Black and White Flycatcher** *Bias musicus*, **Ussher's Dusky Flycatcher** *Artomyias ussheri*, **Olive-bellied Sunbird** *Nectarinia chloropygia*, **Magpie Mannikin** *Lonchura fringilloides* and **Black-winged Oriole** *Oriolus nigripennis*. A walk along the boundary from the end of the road is usually good for under-storey mixed-species flocks and other species such as **Spot-breasted Ibis** *Bostrychia rara*, **African Finfoot** *Podica senegalensis*, **White-bellied Kingfisher** *Corythornis leucogaster* and **Shining Blue Kingfisher** *Alcedo quadribrachys* can be seen along the Afia River. If time permits, a walk along the old logging road towards the Sukuma River can also be rewarding.

## Kruwa (Obeng Krom)

After Abrafo, Kruwa is probably one of the best birding spots in Kakum. The forest there is more intact than at Antwikwaa and a good view of the canopy can be obtained at all times while walking along the old logging road. It is a half-hour walk from the forest edge near Obeng Krom village, but it is well worth the effort. There are many species of fruit trees along the logging track and great views of greenbuls can be obtained when the *Harungana madagascariensis* is fruiting. As many as eight species of **greenbuls** including **Slender-billed** *Andropadus gracilirostris*, **Yellow-whiskered** *A. latirostris*, **Cameroun Sombre** *A. curvirostris*, **Little** *A. virens*, **Ansorge's** *A. ansorgei*, **White-tailed** *Thescelocichla leucopleura*, **Golden** *Calyptocichla serina*, and **Honeyguide** can be seen in the same fruiting tree.

About an hour's brisk walk from Obeng Krom (near the ground platform) lies some very nice forest and Raphia swamp. This is probably the easiest site to find the elusive **Nkulenga Rail**, **Sandy Scops Owl** *Otus icterorhynchus* and **Fraser's Eagle-Owl** *Bubo poensis*.

## Aboabo

The forest at Aboabo is rather degraded. Nevertheless, this is the only area in Kakum where a motorable track passes through forest. Consequently, the view of the canopy at Aboabo is unparalleled and the wide gravel road makes birding easier for large groups. Species of interest there include **Crowned Eagle** *Stephanoaetus coronatus*, **Latham's Forest Francolin**, **Great Blue Turaco** *Corythaeola cristata*, **Bristle-nosed Barbet** *Gymnobucco peli*, **Violet-backed Flycatcher** *Hyltiota violacea*, **Shrike Flycatcher** *Megabyas flammulata*, **Red-cheeked Wattle-eye**, **Golden-backed Weaver** *Ploceus preussi*, and **Blue-bill Spermophaga** *haematina*.

## Volta Region

### Keta Lagoon

Keta Lagoon, about 170 km east of Accra, is the largest wetland site along the coast of Ghana. It is a complex of brackish lagoons with shallow muddy margins, mudflats and salt pans. Like Songaw Lagoon this is also a RAMSAR site<sup>9</sup>. Some of the interesting species to be found there include; **Curlew Sandpiper**, **Spotted Redshank** *Tringa erythropis*, **Eurasian Avocet** *Recurvirostra avosetta*, **Black-tailed Godwit** *Limosa limosa*, **Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* and **Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola*.

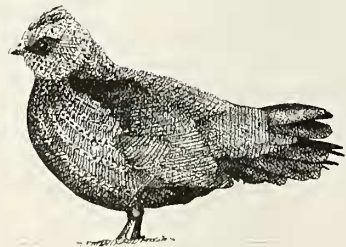
### Amedzofe

Amedzofe is in the southern part of the Togo Hills about 3.5 hours north-east of Accra. To reach this

locality, follow the road toward Hohoe passing west of Ho. At the village of Fume there is a sharp left bend in the road, turn right here and follow the steep winding track to Amedzofe. The elevation at Amedzofe is slightly over 700 m and the view of the Volta basin from this vantage point is quite stunning. There is a guest house near the top of the mountain run by the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation and surrounding this are some remnants of upland evergreen forest. Among some of the more interesting species found here are: **Great Sparrowhawk**, **Ahanta Francolin**, **Yellow-billed Barbet** *Trachyphonus purpuratus*, **Simple Greenbul**, **Little Greenbul**, **Grey-headed Bristlebill**, **Nicator** *Nicator chloris*, **Kemp's Longbill**, **Olive-green Camaroptera** *Camaroptera chloronota*, **Buff-throated Sunbird** *Nectarinia adelberti* and **Pale-fronted Negro-Finch** *Nigrita luteifrons*.

### Agumatsa (Wli Falls)

Wli Falls is a Wildlife Sanctuary east of Hohoe near Afegame. After reaching the headquarters, there is a 25 minute walk to the falls through patches of riverine and lowland forest. The birdlife does not appear to be particularly impressive, but this may be as a result of the difficulty of hearing calls and song above the sound of rushing water. There is a huge roost of **Straw-coloured Fruit Bats** *Eidolon helvum* on the cliff face near the falls. This spectacle, together with the sheer beauty of the cliffs and falls, make this locality worth a visit. Species of special interest include **Stone Partridge**, **African Giant Kingfisher**, **Hairy-breasted Barbet**, **Speckled Tinkerbird**, **Leaf-love** *Pyrrhurus scandens*, **Forest Robin**, **Buff-throated Sunbird**, **Western Black-headed Oriole** *Oriolus brachyrhynchus*, **Red-vented Malimbe** *Malimbus scutatus* and **Chestnut-breasted Negro-Finch** *Nigrita bicolor*.



Stone Partridge *Ptilopachus petrosus*  
Chris Gibbins

### Kyabobo Range National Park (proposed)

This will soon be Ghana's newest national park and probably one of the most interesting. Access is through the village of Shiare about 12 km east of Nkwanta. The terrain there is too steep for vehicles and these must be

parked about 2 km from Shiare and the trip completed on foot. Kyabobo Mountain is 4 km south-east of Shiare, and at 873 m, it is Ghana's second highest peak. The habitat around Shiare and on the Kyabobo massif is submontane with riverine forest in the valleys and Guinea savanna on the exposed ridges and hillsides. This mosaic of habitats is unique in Ghana. When properly inventoried, Kyabobo may well be found to have the highest bird species diversity of any of Ghana's protected areas. Some of the interesting species found there included **Olive Long-tailed Cuckoo** *Cercococcyx olivinus*, **Black Cuckoo** *Cuculus clamosus*, **African Wood Owl** *Strix woodfordi*, **Narina's Trogon** *Apaloderma narina*, **Spotted Honeyguide** *Indicator maculatus*, **Green-backed Woodpecker** *Campethera cailliautii permista*, **Rufous-sided Broadbill** *Smithornis rufolateralis*, **Fanti Saw-wing** *Psalidoprocne obscura*, **Leaf-love**, **Brubru** *Nilaus afer*, **Puff-back**, **Red-billed Shrike**, **Fire-crested Alethe** *Alethe diademata*, **Finsch's Rufous Thrush** *Stizorhina fraseri finschi*, **Familiar Chat** *Cercomela familiaris*, **Brown Illadopsis** *Trichastoma fulvescens molonyanum*, **Rufous-winged Illadopsis** *T. rufescens*, **Capuchin Babbler** *Phyllanthus atripennis*, **Brown Babbler** *Turdoides plebejus*, **Sharpe's Apalis**, **Moustached Grass-Warbler**, **Shrike Flycatcher**, **Black and White Flycatcher**, **Grey Tit-Flycatcher** *Myioparus plumbeus*, **Senegal Batis** *Batis senegalensis*, **Variable Sunbird** *Nectarinia venusta*, **Yellow-mantled** and **Red-colored Widowbird** and **Blue-bill**.

#### **Breweniase Forest Reserve**

Between Kadjebi and Nkwanta there was quite a large expanse of lowland forest along the road. Some of this is within Breweniase Forest Reserve, but most is unprotected and being rapidly converted to agricultural land. The best forest seen was along a stretch of bush road just north of Poasi and passing through Ahamasu and Pampawie. This area would certainly be worth a visit.

### **Ashanti Region**

#### **Kumasi**

Many of the older residential neighbourhoods in Kumasi have large trees and relatively good numbers of birds. Probably the best place to bird, however, is on the campus of the University of Science and Technology.

#### **Lake Bosumtwi**

Lake Bosumtwi is about 35 km south-east of Kumasi. There is not much forest remaining around the lake and on the surrounding hills and, consequently, there

are few species of interest found there. However, there are several sacred groves along the road from Kumasi to Bosumtwi that are worth visiting and many widespread bird species can be seen during the drive.

### **Western Region**

Most of the interesting sites to visit in the western region are forested and many of these are rather inaccessible. The best place to see forest birds is probably Nini-Suhien National Park and Ankasa Resource Reserve. Other interesting sites include Bia National Park and the forest reserves at Subri River, Boin River, Dadeeso, and Cape Three Points. In particular, Cape Three Points Forest Reserve protects some of the best remaining coastal forest in Ghana and access to this site is not too difficult. Visits to any of the other forest reserves will need some advance planning and access to a four-wheel-drive vehicle.

### **Brong-Ahafo Region**

#### **Boabeng-Fiema Sanctuary**

The Boabeng-Fiema Monkey Sanctuary is in the forest-transition zone 130 km north of Kumasi. It can be reached from Techiman by passing through Nkoranza to the east or Maasa to the north. The sanctuary, near Boabeng and Fiema villages, is composed of several small patches of semi-deciduous forest surrounded by rich woodland. These areas were set aside to protect monkeys, the totem of the local people. There is a high density of fig trees in the forest and this, combined with the well-maintained trail system, should make it a good site for birding.

#### **Kintampo Falls**

Kintampo Falls is about 2 km north of Kintampo on the road to Tamale. The area around the falls is protected and some development has been undertaken to facilitate access to the falls. The river below the falls is a good spot for **African Finfoot**, but, as at Wli Falls, the sound of rushing water effectively drowns out most bird calls making birding difficult.

### **Northern Region**

#### **Mole National Park**

Mole National Park is the best known Guinea savanna site for birding in Ghana. Mole covers an area of around 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a total of 316 bird species have been recorded<sup>3,7</sup>. Mole is mostly pristine Guinea savanna, but contains at least nine other habitat types leading to a high species richness<sup>3</sup>. Birds that can be seen include **Hammerkop** *Scopus umbretta*, **Egyptian Plover** *Pluvianus aegyptius*, **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri*, **Standard-winged Nightjar** *Macrodipteryx longipennis*, **Speckled Mousebird** *Colius striatus*, **Carmine Bee-eater**

*Merops nubicus*, **Blue-bellied Roller** *Coracias cyanogaster*, **Abyssinian Ground Hornbill** *Bucorvus abyssinicus*, **Golden-tailed Woodpecker** *Campetbera abingoni*, **Crested Lark** *Galerida cristata*, **Grey-rumped Swallow** *Pseudhirundo griseopyga*, **Yellow-throated Leaf-love** *Chlorocichla flavicollis*, **White-crowned Robin-chat** *Cossypha albicapilla*, **Rufous Cisticola** *Cisticola rufa*, **Red-pate Cisticola** *C. ruficeps*, Smaller **Green-backed Eremomela** *Eremomela pusilla*, **Yellow-bellied Flycatcher** *Hyltiota flavigaster*, **Blue Flycatcher** *Trochocercus longicauda*, **Spotted Creeper** *Salpormis spilonota*, **Beautiful Sunbird** *Nectarinia pulchella*, **Brown-rumped Bunting** *Emberiza forbesi*, **Red-tailed Lavender Waxbill** *Estrilda caerulescens*, **Black-faced Firefinch** *Estrilda larvata*, **Grey-headed Olive-back** *Nesocharis capistrata*, **Chestnut-crowned Sparrow-Weaver** *Plocepasser superciliosus*, **Red-headed Weaver** *Malimbus rubriceps*, **Little Weaver** *Ploceus luteolus*, **Uelle Paradise Whydah** *Vidua interjecta*, **Jambandu Indigobird** *Vidua raricola*, **Lesser Blue-eared Starling** *Lamprotornis chloropterus*, **Yellow-billed Oxpecker** *Buphagus africanus* and **Piapiac**.

#### Other Interesting Localities

There are many other interesting localities for birds in the Northern Region including the following: the dam just west of Gambaga, Nalerigu (particular the compound of the Baptist Medical Center), Nakpanduri and the Gambaga Escarpment, seasonally inundated grasslands along the road from Tamale and Walewale, and Bui National Park along the Black Volta.

#### Upper East Region

This is the only region in Ghana in which the Sudan zone occurs and several bird species are found only in this area. Places to bird include Tono and Vea dams near Bolgatanga, the banks of the White and Red Volta Rivers, and around Bawku. Interesting species which can be seen here include **Grasshopper Buzzard** *Butastur rufipennis*, **Swallow-tailed Kite** *Elanus riocourii*, **White-bellied Bustard** *Eupodotis senegalensis*, **Denham's Bustard** *Neotis denhami*, **Arabian Bustard** *Otis arabs*, **Black-headed Plover** *Vanellus tectus*, **Four-banded Sandgrouse** *Pterocles quadricinctus*, **Speckled Pigeon** *Columba guinea*, **European Turtle Dove** *Streptopelia turtur*, **Abyssinian Roller** *Coracias abyssinica*, **Red-rumped Bush-Lark** *Pinarocorys erythropygia*, **White-rumped Seed-eater** *Serinus leucopygias*, **Cut-throat Amadina** *fasciata*, **Silver-bill** *Lonchura malabarica*, **Long-tailed Glossy Starling** *Lamprotornis caudatus* and **Chestnut-bellied Starling** *Spreo pulcher*.

#### Upper West Region

There are a number of good areas to bird in this region but most localities are remote and the roads in relatively poor condition. There are some intact woodland areas between Tumu and Navrongo and at the Gbele Resource Reserve south of Jeffisi, and the Black Volta valley north of Wa is the only place in Ghana where **Buffalo-Weaver** *Bubalornis albirostris* can be found.

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PO Box 934 Iringa, Tanzania